

1710
[Titus, Silius]

A

SEASONABLE SPEECH

MADE BY A

Worthy Member of PARLIAMENT
in the House of Commons, concern-
ing the other House. *Mar. 1659.*

Mr. Speaker,

THIS Day's Debate is but too clear a Proof that we English-men are right *Islanders*, variable and mutable like the Air we live in. For, Sir, if that were not our Temper, we should not be now Disputing, *Whether after all those hazards we have run, that Blood we have spilt, that Treasure we have exhausted, we should not now sit down just where we did begin; and of our own accords submit our selves to that Slavery, which we have not only ventured our Estates and Lives, but I wish I could not say, our Souls and Consciences, to throw off.* What others, Sir, think of this Levity, I cannot tell; I mean those that steer their Consciences by *Occasions*, and cannot lose the Honour they never had: But truly, Sir, for my own Part, I dare as little not declare it to be my Opinion, as others more prudential dare avow it to be theirs, That we are this Day making good all the Reproaches of our Enemies, owning of our selves Oppressors, Murderers,

A

derers, Regicides, Subverters of that, which now we do not only acknowledge to have been a Lawful Government, but by recalling it, confess it now to be the Best : Which, Sir, if it be true, and that we now begin to see aright, I heartily wish our Eyes had been *sooner* open ; and for Three Nations sake, that we had purchas'd our Conviction at a *cheaper* rate. We might, Sir, in *Forty Two*, have been, what we thus contend to be in *Fifty Nine* ; and our Consciences have had much less to answer for to God, and our Reputations to the World.

But Mr. *Speaker*, I wish with all my Soul, I did state our Case to you amiss, and that it were the Question only, Whether we would voluntarily relapse into the Disease we were formerly possessed with, and of our own accords take up our old Yoke, that we with Wearing and Custom had made habitual and easy, and which (it may be) 'twas more our Wantonness than our Pressure, that made us throw it off. But this, Sir, is not now the Question : That which we deliberate, is not, Whether we will say we do not care to be *free*, we like our old Masters, and will now be content to have our Ears bored at the Door-posts of their House, and so serve them for ever ; but, Sir, as if we were contending for Shame as well as Servitude, we are carrying our *Ears to be bored* at the Doors of *another House* : A House, Sir, without Name, and therefore it is but congruous it should consist of Members without Family : A House that inverts the Order of Slavery, and subjects it to our Servants ; and yet, in contradiction to Scripture, we do not only not think that Subjection intolerable, but are now pleading for it. In a word, Sir, It is a House of so incongruous and odious a Composition and Mixture, that certainly the grand Architect would never have so framed it, had it not been his Design as well to shew to the World *the Contempt he had of us*, as to demonstrate *the Power he had over us*.

Sir, That it may appear, that I intend not to be so prudent, (as far as my Part is concerned) as to make a voluntary Rignation of my Liberty and Honour to this excellent Part of his lie Highness his Last Will and Testament, I shall crave, Sir, the Leave to declare in a few Particulars my Opinion of this Other House, wherein I cannot but promise my self to be favourably heard by some,
but

but patiently heard by all : For those Englishmen that are against this House, will certainly with Content hear the Reasons why others are so too ; those Courtiers that are for it, give me Evidence enough to think, that in Nature there is nothing which they cannot willingly endure.

First, Sir, As to the Author and Frammer of this House of Peers ; Let me put you in mind, it was He, that with reiterated Oaths, had often *sworn to be true and faithful to the Government without it* ; and not only sworn so himself, but had been the chief Instrument both to draw and *compel others to swear so too* : So, Sir, that the Foundation of this Noble Fabrick was laid in Perjury, and was begun with the Violation and Contempt, as well of the Laws of God, as of the Nation. He, Sir, that call'd Monarchy *Antichristian* in another, and indeed made it so in himself : He that voted a House of Lords *dangerous and unnecessary*, and too truly made it so in his Partisans : He that with Fraud and Force deprived you of your Liberty when he was Living, and *entailed Slavery upon you at his Death* ; 'tis He, Sir, that hath left you these worthy Overseers of that his Last Will and Testament ; who, however they have behaved themselves in other Trusts, we may be confident they will endeavour faithfully to discharge themselves in this. In a word, Sir, had this Other House no other Fault but its Institution and Author, I should think that original Sin enough for its Condemnation : For I am of their Opinion that think, that for the Good of Example, all Acts and Monuments of Tyrants are to be expunged and erased, that if possible their Memory might be no longer-liv'd than their Carcasses. And the Truth is, their good Laws are of the Number of their Snares, and but base Brokage for our Liberty.

But, Sir, to impute to this Other House no other Faults but its own, you may please in the first Place to consider of the Power which His Highness hath left it, according to that *humble Petition and Advice*, which he was pleased to give Order to the Parliament to present unto him. For, Sir, as the Romans had Kings, so had His Highness *Parliaments amongst his Instruments of Slavery* ; And I hope, Sir, it will be no Offence for me to pray that his Son may not have them so too. But, Sir, they have a *Negative*.

tive Voice, and all other Circumstances of that Arbitrary Power, which made the former House intolerable ; only the Dignity and Quality of the Persons themselves is wanting, that our Slavery may be accompanied with Ignominy and Affront. *And now, Mr. Speaker, have we not gloriously vindicated the Nation's Liberty ? Have we not worthily employed our Blood and Treasure to abolish that Power that was set over us by the Law, to have the same impos'd upon us without a Law ?* And after all that Sound and Noise we have made in the World, of the People's Legislative Power, and of the Supremacy and Omnipotency of their Representatives ; we now see there is no more Power left them, but what is put in the Ballance, and equalled by the Power of a few Retainers of Tyranny, who are so far from being of the People's Choice, that the most part of them are only known to the Nation by the Villanies and Mischiefs they have committed in it.

In the next Place, Sir, you may please to consider, that the Persons invested with this Power, are all of them nominated and designed by the Lord Protector (for to say, *by him and his Council*, hath in effect no more Distinction, than if one should say, *by Oliver and Cromwel.*) By this means the Protector himself, by his own and his Peers Negative, becomes in effect Two of the Three Estates ; and by consequence, is possess'd of Two Parts of the Legislative Power. I think this can be a doubt to no Man, that will but take the Pains to read over that fair Catalogue of those Noble Lords ; for certainly no Man that reads their Names, can possibly fancy for what other Virtues or good Qualities such a Composition should be made choice of, but only the Certainty of their Compliance with whatsoever should be enjoined them by their Creator. (Pardon, Sir, that Name ; for 'tis proper applicable, *where things are made of nothing.*) Now, Sir, if in the former Government, *Encrease of Nobility* was a Grievance, because the *New Nobility*, having fresh Obligation to the Crown, were the easilier led to Compliance with it : And if one of the main Reasons for Exclusion of the *Bishops* out of the House of Lords, was because that they being of the King's making, were in effect so many certain Votes for whatever the King had a mind to carry in that House : How much more assured will that Inconvenience now be, when the Protector,

teſtor, that wants nothing of the King, but, in every Senſe the Title, ſhall not only make and nominate a Part, but of himſelf conſtitute the whole Houſe ? In a word, Sir, if our Liberty was endangered by the former Houſe, we may give it loſt in the Other Houſe : And 'tis in all reſpects as advantageous and ſecure for the Liberty of the Nation, which we come hither to redeem, to allow this Power and Notion to his Highneſs's Officers, or Council, nay his very Chaplains, as to his other Creatures and Partifans in his Other Houſe.

Now having conſidered, Sir, their Author, Power, and Conſtitution, give me leave to make ſome few Obſervations, tho' but in general, of the Perſons themſelves that are deſigned to be *our Lords and Maſters* ; and let us ſee what either the extraordinary Quality or Qualifications are of theſe egregious Legiſlators, which may juſtify their Choice, and prevail with the People to admit them, at leaſt, into equal Authority with the whole Repreſentative Body of themſelves. But what I ſhall ſpeak, Sir, of their Quality, or any thing elſe concerning them, I would be thought to ſpeak with Diſtinction, and to intend only of the major Part. For I acknowledge, Mr. *Speaker*, the Mixture of this Other Houſe to be like the Compoſitions of Apothecaries, who are uſ'd to mix ſomething of Reliſh, ſomething grateful to the Taſte, to qualify their bitter Drugs, which elſe, perchance, would be immediately ſpit out, and never ſwallowed. So, Sir, His Highneſs, of deplorable Memory to this Nation, to countenance as well the Want of Quality as Honesty in the reſt, hath nominated ſome, againſt whom there lies no other Reproach, but only that Nomination ; but not, Sir, out of any Reſpect to their Qualities, or Regard to their Virtues, but with regard to the no Quality, to the no Virtues of the reſt : Which truly, Mr. *Speaker*, if he had not done, we could eaſily have given a more expreſs Name to his Other Houſe, than he hath been pleaſed to do. For we know a Houſe deſign'd only for Beggars and Malefactors, is a *House of Correction*, and term'd ſo by your Law. But, Mr. *Speaker*, ſetting thoſe few Perſons aſide, who, I hope, think the Nomination a Diſgrace, and the ever coming to ſit there, much a greater : Can we without Indignation think on the reſt ? He that's firſt in their Roll, a

condemn'd Coward, one that out of Fear and Baseness did once what he could to betray your Liberties, and does now the same for Gain. The Second, a Person of as little Sense as Honesty, prefer'd for no other Reason but his no Worth, his no Conscience; except that his cheating his Father of all he had, was thought a Virtue by him, who by sad Experience, we find hath done as much for his Mother, his Country. The Third, a Cavalier, a Presbyterian, an Independent; for a Republick, for a Protector, for every thing, for nothing, but only that one thing, *Money*. 'Twere endless to run thro' them all, to tell you, Sir, of their Lordships of Seventeen Pounds Land a Year of Inheritance; of their Farmer Lordships, Dray-men Lordships, Cobler Lordships, *without one Foot of Land, but what the Blood of English-men hath been the Price of*: These, Sir, are to be our Rulers, these the *Judges of our Lives and Fortunes*; to these we are to stand bare, whilst their Pageant Stage Lordships daign to give us a Conference upon their Breeches. Mr. *Speaker*, we have already had too much Experience, how unsupportable Servants are, when they become our Masters. All kind of Slavery is miserable in the Account of all generous Minds; but that which comes accompany'd with Scorn and Contempt, stirs every Man's Indignation, and is endured by none, whom Nature does not intend for Slaves, as well as Fortune.

I say not this, Mr. *Speaker*, to revile any Man with his Meanness; for I never thought either the Malignity or Indulgence of Fortune, to be (with wise or just Men) the Grounds either of their ill or their good Opinion. Mr. *Speaker*, I blame not in these Men the Faults of their Fortune, any otherwise but as they make them their own: I object to you their Poverty, because it is accompanied with Ambition; I mind you of their Quality, because they themselves forget it. So that 'tis not the Men I am angry with, but with their Lordships; not with Mr. *Barkstead*, or Mr. *Goaler* (Titles I could well allow him) but with *The Right Honourable, our singular good Lord and Goaler*: 'Tis this Incongruity, Mr. *Speaker*, I am displeased with.

So, Sir, that tho' we easily grant Poverty and Necessity to be no Faults, yet we must allow them to be great Impediments in the

the Way of Honour, and such as nothing but extraordinary Virtue and Merit can well remove. The Scripture reckons it among *Jeroboam's* great Faults, that *he made Priests of the meanest of the People*; and sure it was none of the Virtues of our *Jeroboam* (who hath set up his Calves too, and would have our Tribes come up and worship them) that he observed the same Method, in making of Lords.

One of the few Requests the Portugals made to *Philip II.* of *Spain*, when he got that Kingdom (as His late Highness did this) by an Army, was, *That he would not make Nobility contemptible; by advancing such to that Degree, whose Quality or Virtue could be no way thought to deserve it.* Nor have we formerly been less apprehensive of such Inconveniencies our selves: It was in *Richard I's* Time, one of the Bishop of *Ely's* Accusations, that Castles and Forts of Trust he did *obscuris & ignotis hominibus tradere*, put in the Hands of obscure and unknown Men: But We, Mr. Speaker, to such a kind of Men are delivering up the Power of our Laws, and in that the Power of All.

In the 17 *Edward IV.* there past an Act of Parliament for the degrading of *John Nevil* Marquess *Montague* and Duke of *Bedford*; the Reason express'd in the Act, *Because he had not a Revenue sufficient for the maintaining of that Dignity*; to which he added, *That when Men of mean Birth are called to high Estate, and have no Livelihood to support it, it induceth Briberies, Extortions, and all kinds of Injustices that are followed by Gain.* And in the Parliament of 2 *Carol.* the Peers in a Petition against Scottish and Irish Titles, told the King, *That 'tis a Novelty without President; That Men should possess Honours, where they possess nothing else; and that they should have a Vote in Parliament, where they have not a Foot of Land.* But if it had been added, Sir, *Or have no Land but what is the Purchase of their Gallantries*; against how many of our new Peers had this been an important Objection? To conclude, Sir, It hath been a very just and reasonable Care, amongst all Nations, not to render that despis'd and contemptible to the People, which is design'd for their Reverence, and their Awe: Which, Sir, bare and empty Title, without Quality or Virtue, never procured any Man, any more than the Image in the Fable made the Asks adored that carried it. After

After their Quality, give me Leave, Sir, to speak a Word or Two of their Qualifications; which certainly ought in reason to carry some Proportion with the Employments they design themselves. The House of Lords, Sir, are our King's Hereditary great Councils: They are the Highest Court of Judicature; they have their Part in judging and determining of the Reasons of making new Laws, and of abrogating old: From amongst them we take our great Officers of State; they are commonly our Generals at Land, and our Admirals at Sea: In conclusion, Sir, they are both of the Essence and Constitution of our Old Government; and have besides, the greatest and noblest Share in the Administration. Now certainly, Sir, to judge according to the Dictates of Reason, one would imagine some small Faculties and Endowments to be necessary for the discharging of such a Calling; and those such as are not usually acquired in Shops and Warehouses, nor found by following the Plow: Now what other Academies most of their Lordships have been bred in, but their Shops; what other Arts they have been versed in, but those which more require good Arms and good Shoulders, than good Heads, I think, *Mr. Speaker*, we are yet to be informed. Sir, we commit not the Education of our Children to ignorant and illiterate Masters; nay, we trust not our very Horses to unskilful Grooms: I beseech you, Sir, let Us think it belongs to Us, to have some Care into whose Hands we commit the Management of the Common-wealth: And if we cannot have Persons of Birth and Fortune to be our Rulers, to whose Quality we would willingly submit; I beseech you, Sir, for our Credit's and Safety's sake, let us seek Men (at least) of Parts and Education, to whose Abilities we may have some reason to give way. If, Sir, a Patient dies under a Physician's Hand, the Law esteems that not a Felony, but a Misfortune in the Physician; but if one that is no Physician undertakes the Management of a Cure, and the Party miscarries; the Law makes the Emperique a Felon, and sure in all Men's Opinion the Patient a Fool. To conclude, Sir; For Great Men to govern 'tis ordinary; for Able Men 'tis natural; Knaves many times come to it by Force and Necessity, and Fools sometimes by Chance: But *universal Choice and Election of Fools and Knaves for Government*, was never yet made by any who were not themselves like those they chose.

But

But methinks, *Mr. Speaker*, I see ready to rise after me, some Gentleman that shall tell you the great Services that their *new Lordships* have done the Commonwealth ; that shall extol their Valour, their Godliness, their Fidelity to the Cause ; The Scripture too, no doubt, as 'tis to all purposes, shall be brought in to argue for them ; and we shall hear of the *Wisdom of the poor Man that saved the City*, of the *not many wise, not many mighty* ; Attributes I can no way deny to be due to their Lordships. *Mr. Speaker*, I shall be as forward as any Man to declare their Services, and acknowledge them ; tho' I might tell you, that the same Honour is not purchas'd by the Blood of an *Enemy*, and of a *Citizen* ; that for *Victories in Civil Wars*, till our Armies march thro' the City, *I have not read that the Conquerors have been so void of Shame as to triumph*. *Cesar*, not much more indulgent to his Country than our late Protector, did not so much as write *publick Letters* of his Victory at *Pharsalia*, much less had *Days of Thanksgiving* to his Gods, and Anniversary Feasts for having been a prosperous Rebel, and given Justice and his Country the worst.

But, Sir, I leave this Argument, and to be as good as my Word, come to put you in mind of some of their Services, and the Obligation you owe them for the same. To speak nothing Sir, of one of my Lords Commissioners Valour at *Bristol*, nor of another Noble Lord's brave Adventure at the *Bear-Garden* ; I must tell you, Sir, that most of them have had the Courage to do things, which (I may boldly say) few other Christians durst have so adventured their Souls to have attempted : They have not only subdued their Enemies, but their Masters, that raised and maintained them ; *they have not only Conquered Scotland and Ireland, but Rebellious England too* ; and there suppress a *malignant Party of Magistrates and Laws*. And that nothing should be wanting to make them indeed compleat Conquerors, (without the Help of Philosophy) they have even Conquered themselves. All *Shame* they have subdued, as perfectly as all *Justice* ; the *Oaths* they have taken, they have as easily digested, as their old General could himself ; Publick Covenants and Engagements, they have trampled under Foot : In conclusion, so intire a Victory they have over themselves, that their Consciences are as much their Servants, as, *Mr. Speaker*, we are. But, Sir,
C give

(10)
give me Leave to conclude with that which is more admirable than all this, and shews the Confidence they have of themselves and us: After having many times trampled on the Authority of the House of Commons, and no less than five times dissolv'd them, they hope for those good Services to the House of Commons, by the House of Commons to be made a House of Lords.

I have been over-long, Sir, for which I crave your Pardon; therefore in a word I conclude. I beseech you let us think it our Duty to have a Care of Two Things: First, *That Villanies be not encouraged with the Rewards of Virtue*: Secondly, *That the Authority and Majesty of the Government of this Nation be not defiled*; and exposed to Contempt, by committing so considerable a Part of it to Persons of as mean Quality as Parts.

The *Thebans* did not admit *Merchants* into Government, till they had left their Traffick Ten Years: Sure 'twould have been long before Coblers and Dray-men would have been allowed. If, Sir, the Wisdom of this House shall find it necessary to begin where we left, and shall think we have been hitherto like the Prodigal, and that now when our Necessities perswade us (*i. e.*) that we are almost brought to herd it with Swine, now 'tis high time to think of a Return; Let us without more ado, without this motley Mixture, even take our *Rulers* as at the first, so that we can be but reasonably secured to avoid *our Counsellors* as at the beginning.

Give me leave, Sir, to release your Patience with a short Story. *Livy* tells us, there was a State in *Italy*, an Aristocracy, where the Nobility stretch'd their Prerogative too high, and *presumed a little too much upon the People's Liberty and Patience*; whereupon the Discontents were so general and so great, that they apparently tended to a Dissolution of Government, and the turning of all things into Anarchy and Confusion. At the same time, besides these Distempers at home, there was a potent Enemy ready to fall upon them from abroad, that had been an Over-match for them at their best Union, but now in these Disorders, was like to find them very ready and very easy Prey: A wise Man, Sir, in the City, that did not at all approve of the Insolency of the Nobility, and as little liked Popular Tumults, bethought himself of this Stratagem, to cozen his Country into Safety. Upon a pretence of Counsel,

Counſel, he procured the Nobility to meet all together ; which when they had done, he found a way to lock all the Doors upon them ; goes away himſelf, and takes the Keys with him : Then immediately he ſummons the People ; tells them, that by a Contrivance of his, he had taken all the Nobility in a Trap ; That now was the Time for them to be revenged upon them for all their Inſolencies ; That therefore they ſhould immediately go along with him and diſpatch them. Sir, the Officers of our Army after a Faſt, could not be more ready for the Villany, than this People were ; and accordingly they made as much Haſte to the Slaughter as their Lord Protector could deſire them. But, Sir, this wiſe Man I told you of, was their Lord Protector indeed : As ſoon as he had brought the People where the Parliament was ſitting, and when they but expected the Word to fall to the Butchery, and take their Heads ; *Gentlemen, ſays he, tho' I would not care how ſoon this Work of Reformation were over ; yet in this Ship of the Common-wealth we muſt not throw the Steers-men over-board, till we have provided others for the Helm : Let us conſider before we take theſe Men away, in what other Hands we may more ſecurely truſt our Liberty, and the Management of the Common-wealth.* And ſo he advis'd them before the putting down of the former, to be- think themſelves of conſtituting another Houſe : He begins and nominates one, a Man highly cry'd up in the Popular Faction, a con- fiding Man, one of much Zeal, little Senſe, and no Quality ; you may ſuppoſe him, Sir, a zealous Cobler : The People in concluſion murmured at this, and were loath their Fellow-mutineer, for no other Virtue but Mutining, ſhould come to be advanced to be their Maſter ; and by their Looks and Murmur ſufficiently expreſs'd the Diſtaſte they took at ſuch a Motion. Then he nominates another, as mean a Mechanick as the former ; you may imagine him, Sir, a buſtling rude Dray-man, or the like : He was no ſooner named, but ſome burſt out a laughing, others grew angry and railed at him, and all deteſted and ſcorn'd him. Upon this a Third was named for a Lordſhip, one of the ſame Batch, and every way fit to fit with the other Two. The People then fell into a con- fuſed Laugh and Noiſe, and enquired, if ſuch were Lords, who (by all the Gods) would be content to be the Commons ?

Sir,

Sir, Let me be bold (by 'the good Leave of the Other House and yours) to ask the same Question? But, Sir, to conclude this Story, and with it I hope the Other House: When this wise Man I told you of, perceived they were now sensible of the Inconvenience and Mischief they were running into, and saw that the *pulling down their Rulers*, would prove in the end, but the *setting up of their Servants*; He thought them then prepared to hear Reason; and told them, *You see, saith he, That as bad as this Government is, we cannot, for any thing I see, agree upon a better: What then, if after this Fright we have put our Nobility in, and the Demonstration we have given them of our Power, we try them once more, whether they will mend, and for the future behave themselves with more Moderation?* That People, Mr. Speaker, were so wise as to comply with that wise Proposition, and to think it easier to mend their Old Rulers, than to make New. And I wish, Mr. Speaker, we may be so wise to think so too.

F I N I S.



LONDON, Printed and Sold by John Morphew near Stationers-
Hall. 1716. Price Three-Pence.

July 5

p. M.
Howe
10-30
37283